(b) if so, the names of the organisations who have the hosting facilities in India; and

(c) if not, whether Government will consider licensing such facilities?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) VSNL is providing the web hosting facilities. In addition, National Informatics Centre (NIC) and ERNET also offer such facilities to Educational/Research and Government Sector.

(c) As per the new Internet policy, Government is issuing licences to private companies to work as Internet Service Providers. With these licences, the companies can host websites also if so they desire.

Hike in Postal Rates

*280. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the postal rates of stationery have been raised w.e.f. 31st August, 1998, to the extent of 100% and 150% in some cases;

(b) if so, the justification therefor;

(c) whether Government propose to reconsider their earlier decision to give relief to the poor people;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor.

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI JAGMOHAN): (a) and (b) The percentage of increase in rates of eight postal services effected from 31st August, 1998 ranges from 20% to 150% as per details given below:

(i)	Letter Card	-	50%
(ii)	Letter	-	50%
(iii)	Parcel	-	25%
(iv)	Registration	-	20%
(v)	Insurance	-	25-50%
(vi)	Competition Post Card	-	50%
(vii)	Acknowledgement	-	100%
(viii)	Money Order Form	-	150%

These rates were revised in order to meet partly the increased cost of operation of various postal services requiring considerable subsidy from the general budget. The working expenses of the Department of Posts has increased substantially after the revision of the pay scales with effect from 1.1.1996. It is estimated that even after these revision of tariff the revenue will not be adequate to meet the cost of operation in respect of majority of postal services.

(c) There is no proposal to reconsider the rates revised w.e.f. 31st August, 1998.

(d) Does not arise in view of the reply to part (c) above.

(e) The impact of revision of rates indicated in reply to parts (a) & (b) is likely to be minimal on poor people as no revision of tariff has been effected in the case of Postcards and in the rate of Money Order commission which are generally used by them.

WRITTEN ANSWERS TO UNSTARRED QUESTIONS

Forewarning Regarding Shortage of Onions

2016. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE: SHRI NILOTPAL BASU:

Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether Ministry of Agriculture had received any report/information from the Ministry of Science and Technology or the Meteorological Department/Institute suggesting that there is a possibility of the failure of the onion crop due to unseasonal rains; and

(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI SOMPAL): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

Delay in Release of Assistance to Gujarat

2017. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the PRIME MINISTER be